

*The Harmony between Natural and
Revealed Religion, asserted.*

IN A *193. f. 9.*
S E R M O N

Preached before the

Worshipful the MASTER, WARDENS,

AND

Company of *APOTHECARIES*, in *London*,

On the 23d of *September*, 1731.

By T. CURTEIS, *Rector of* Wrotham *in* Kent.

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The History of the
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S E R I E S

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by T. Corwin

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Author

To the W O R S H I P F U L
The M A S T E R *and* W A R D E N S

And the Other
G E N T L E M E N,

M E M B E R S of the
Company of A P O T H E C A R I E S, *London* ;

At whose Joint-Request
The ensuing D I S C O U R S E is made Publick,

The same is humbly Inscribed;

B Y

Their most Obedient Servant,

T. Curteis.

To the WORTHINGTON

THE MASTER AND WARDENS

And the Other

GENTLEMEN

Members of the

Company of Apothecaries, London;

At whose Invitation

The following DISCOURSE is made Publick,

The same is humbly Intreated;

BY

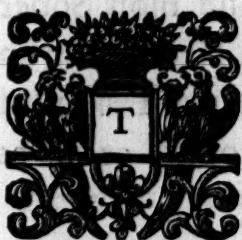
JOHN AND OLIVER JAMES

T. Currier.



R O M. i. part of ver. 20.

*The invisible Things of Him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly * known, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead —.*



THE Apostle St. Paul, having asserted the transcendent Excellency and Advantages of the Christian Religion, as being † *the Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that obediently believes it*; endeavours, in many Parts of this Excellent *Epistle*, to prove its Divine Authority and Obligations, from the perfect Agreement which it bears with the Dictates of Natural Religion, and with the many clear and unquestionable Testimonies of Sacred Prophecy. He plainly intimates to Us, in these Words, That the manifold Works of Creation and Providence are so many legible Characters, to point out the infinite and adorable Perfections of the Supreme Being; and claim a Religious Acknowledgment from the common Reason and Understanding of Mankind. In the foregoing Verse, he tells us, that there is a τὸ γνωστὸν, or something *that may be known of God*, manifested to all Men by

* Νοῦμα κατ'ὁρᾶται, i. e. perspicuè cognoscuntur. *Paræus* in Locum. Intellectum subeunt. *Id. ibid.* Velut oculis ipsis sese intuenda præbent. *Beza.*

† Ver. 16.

the Light of Nature; and that this, so far as they either stifle, or act contrary to it, *will leave them* * altogether without Excuse. It were greatly to be wish'd, that in an Age and Nation professing the most pure and reformed Christianity, there were no need of looking back to the first Principles of Natural Religion, to recommend the invaluable Blessing of that Divine Revelation, which the Best and Wisest of Men have, for so many Ages, unanimously esteem'd as the greatest Happiness on this Side Heaven: But the palpable Degeneracy and Corruption, both in Principles and Practice, into which not a Few, though pretending to a more refined Way of Thinking, are shamefully sunk (far, even very far beneath the Religious Acknowledgments of the most Sober and Considerate Heathens) may be a sufficient Excuse for an Attempt of this Nature. It shall therefore be the Design of my following Discourse, to give a brief Account, as far as the present Time will admit,

1. Of the strong and universal Obligations of *Natural Religion*.
2. Of the Reasonableness, the superior Advantages, and inestimable Worth of the *Christian Institution*. And,
3. To draw some plain and rational Inferences from the Whole.

1. As to *Natural Religion*.

This will appear to be strongly recommended and enforced, from a serious Consideration of the admirable Beauty, the

* 'Αναπολογήτης.

excellent Order and infinite Variety, the great Usefulness and wise Contrivance of all the Works of Creation and Providence ; and from the numberless Productions of Nature, so admirably suited to the Delight and Benefit of Rational Beings. Every Part of the visible World, from the Celestial Orbs, down to this lower habitable Earth ; from the most intelligent Creature, to the lowest Rank of Brutes, and even to the meanest Insect, Plant or Mineral, must needs appear to every Serious and Thinking Person, as the Contrivance of an infinitely Wise and Almighty Agent ; and the Effect of unerring Counsel, as well as of infinite Power. To observe a constant Order and Regularity among so many different Parts ; to see the beautiful Face of Nature decay, and, as it were, die every Year, and yet be as constantly revived ; to see the natural Powers and Operations of Things suspended or laid asleep, at certain Periods, and then restored to Life and Activity, so as to produce their wonted desirable Effects, for the Comfort and Benefit of Mankind ; cannot, without the grossest Absurdity, be ascribed to blind Chance, but is an undeniable Proof of the provident Care, Wisdom, Power and Goodness of the supreme *Cause*, which gave Being to all Things ; and naturally tends to raise our Minds (as the *Text* has intimated) both to an Awful Apprehension, and a Religious Acknowledgment of the *ἀβυσσος*, or *invisible Things of God, even His Eternal Power and Deity* ; and likewise, to an Obedience suitable to such Knowledge, *i. e.* to a becoming Fear, Love and Reverence of Him, as the highest Good ; by the Exercise of all those moral Vertues, and religious Acts of Devotion, which are agreeable to His holy Nature and Will. This is yet further enforced (as the holy Psalmist * has observed) from the many Wonders which appear in

* Psalm cxxxix. 14, 15, 16.

the Composition of the Human Frame: Of which the Time allotted me will admit only of very brief and general Hints. There is scarce any Thing, wherein the Divine Wisdom, Power and Providence are more conspicuous, than in the admirable Contrivance, the exact Symmetry, and the mutual Offices of all the constituent Parts, both Solid and Fluid: In the provident Design of those numberless and multiform Glands, so curiously adapted to the great Variety of necessary Secretions: And in the happy Temperament, the exquisite Texture, the regular Distribution, and impulsive Energy of the Blood and Spirits, aided by the volatile Nitre of the Air, both to feed and cherish the tender Lamp of Life, and to preserve a due Exercise of the Locomotive and Rational Powers. As all these jointly agree to prove their Great Original; so they ought to assist our Contemplative Enquiries after Him, *in whom we live, and move, and have our Being*. But, for this, there will appear a stronger Reason, if we consider the more Sublime and Capacious Part of Man, the Immortal Soul; wherein he bears a lively Resemblance of his Almighty Creator. From the great Compass of its Thoughts, the boundless Extent of its Desires, and the Vastness of its Capacity, in Considering, Examining, Recollecting, Contriving, Reasoning; comprehending what is past, present and to come; forming Ideas of invisible Objects, and reaching after a more suitable Good than the whole Creation affords; what Inference can be more clear and natural, than that there is One, only Perfect, most Glorious and Infinite Being, the immense Fountain of Life, Wisdom, Goodness and Love; who is every way sufficient to fill and satisfy its most enlarged Desires? From that innate Principle, called Conscience, the faithful Witness and Recorder of all our Actions, which approves them whilst agreeable to the Rules of Vertue and Religion,

Religion, and gives us such a Trust in the Divine Goodness as is superior to all the Troubles of this Life ; but condemns every Instance of a wicked and unworthy Behaviour ; filling our Minds with the just Apprehensions of a future Account ; what Inference is more reasonable, than that there is an Omniscient Eye, always watching over Us to observe our Actions ; and a supreme Judge, who will pass a Righteous Sentence upon them ? Of this, the wiser Sort of *Heathens* were apprized ; when they proved, by strong and invincible Reasoning, the Soul's Immortality, and eternal Duration in a Future State, from its being an Immaterial Substance, and independent on the corruptible Body ; such as can exert its Operations when the Other is asleep, and appears no better than a warm Carcase ; and is often more active, clear and vigorous, when the Earthly Tabernacle, which imprisons it, is feeble and decaying. They further argued for its Eternal and Incorruptible Nature, from its Noble Aspirations after Divine Wisdom ; as being Superior to all Bodily Pleasures, and Sensible Objects. From whence they justly inferred, That some more excellent and adequate Satisfaction is prepared for this Sublimed Part of Man in another World ; and that this will be so truly perfect, and every way sufficient to compleat its Happiness, that Wisdom, Knowledge ; and whatsoever tends to create perfect Love, Satisfaction and Joy, shall be its peculiar Portion and Reward for ever. Great and Excellent Minds are usually filled with the most Glorious and Exalted Hopes ; whilst their own conscious Vertue and Integrity gives Them a decent and humble Confidence in the Approbation and Favour of a Being infinite in Goodness and Mercy. But certainly, no Temper on Earth is so mean and abject, and in a Word, so truly

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wretched,

wretched, as Theirs, who not only content and please Themselves with a distant Hope, that they shall be Nothing, after this poor and miserable Life; but, in Despite of Reason, and their own frequent Convictions, labour to fancy that They shall be so. A wretched Hope, at the Best, if there was any Ground for it; and such as Human Nature would shudder at the Thoughts of, if they were not conscious of a Behaviour which has made them incapable of any thing better, and justly liable to what is infinitely worse! The Inspired *Psalmist* therefore, with great Justness, pronounces that Man a *Fool*, who presumes to entertain the least Imagination in his Heart, *that there is no God*, and consequently no future State of Rewards and Punishment. For, if he was of a sound Mind, his own Reason and Conscience would assure him of the contrary; and that Mankind, without a farther View of Happiness than this World can afford, from that very Power of Thinking, which dignifies them so much beyond the lower sensitive Beings, would in Reality become the most uneasy and disconsolate Part of the whole Creation. Now, if it will oblige those unhappy Persons, who are under such a desperate Infatuation; let it be supposed, against all the Reason in the World, and the strongest Proofs which any future Things are capable of, that the Hopes of a Blessed Immortality should prove deceitful at the last; yet it must be acknowledged, even by the unfairest Adversaries, that they are Great and Glorious Hopes, every way suited to the Dignity of an human Mind; and that there is, at least, a present Advantage attending them: As they are powerful enough to regulate the disorderly Passions and Affections, to support a Man under all the Evils of this Life, and to carry him, with Serenity and Comfort, through the gloomy
Shades

Shades of Death. So that every bold Scoffer at Religion, if he will exclude himself from a Share in these invaluable Hopes, without pretending to substitute any Equivalent in the Room of them, would do well to consider how much he is an Enemy to the common Good of others, as well as his own; since Religion is of so vast Importance to the Happiness and orderly Government of the World, that it could not long subsist without those ennobling Vertues which are powerfully recommended and enjoined by the Christian Dispensation. Therefore

2. It behoves Us to consider, with Minds unprejudiced, the Reasonableness, the superior Advantages, and inestimable Worth of that Holy Institution.

And certainly, if we take a View of that Bright and Glorious Scene which the Evangelical Doctrine has laid open to Mankind; we shall find it every way amiable, attractive and delightful, beyond all Comparison, and above the highest Elegancy of Expression; perfectly agreeable to the infinite Wisdom, Mercy and Goodness of God, and to the Miseries, Wants, Imperfections, and even the most exalted Wishes of reasonable Beings. A Doctrine, which has clearly revealed to Us much more than the Light of Nature, or the *Mosaical* Institution could ever have done, concerning the Glorious Attributes of the Almighty, and His delightful Propension to bestow Pardon, Peace, Consolation and Eternal Happiness on Mankind; under the most mild and merciful Conditions, not only practicable, but easy and pleasant in themselves! A Doctrine founded in Love and Pity, full of Condescension and Goodness, and of the sweetest Encouragement and Hope; suited to the frail and fallen State of Human

Nature, and in every Respect, worthy of the infinite and adorable Perfections of its Divine Author; as it eminently tends to restore them to a State of Purity, resembling the moral Rectitude of the Supreme and Eternal Mind! Some of the Learned and Deep-thinking, among the *Heathen Writers*, were sensibly affected with the universal Corruption and Degeneracy of Human Nature; particularly *Plato*, *Maximus Tyrius* and *Jamblicus*; though they were ignorant of the only true Means of its Reparation. For, if the whole Human Race be considered as fallen, and estranged from God, they cannot but be exposed to many anxious and perplexing Fears, with regard to that Future and Everlasting State, which their Immortal Souls must unavoidably enter upon, at the laying down of these frail and perishing Bodies. When they reflect seriously, they must needs be sensible of what is asserted in Holy Writ, *That all have sinned, and fallen short of the Glory of God*; and that the numberless Offences of their whole Lives will lie upon them as an insupportable Weight, which no future Obedience, if they could attain to it in never so great Perfection, can possibly atone for: So that, without the Sovereign Mercy of that Infinite Being, whom they are conscious of having grievously offended, they must bear the Guilt and Punishment to Eternity. In this deplorable Case, their own Reason and Conscience, which is the pure Voice of Nature, can afford but little Comfort; or, at best, no solid and satisfactory Assurance, from any general Notions of the Divine Goodness: So that the Mind, being variously exercised between the Two contrary Passions of Hope and Fear, is altogether at a Loss where to fix itself. This naturally tends to extinguish all solid Peace and Joy; and both to damp and enfeeble the active Powers of the Soul, in its Endeavours of Amendment; so long as the Success

appears

appears doubtful, and the Acceptance of such Endeavours uncertain. Now, under this weak and helpless State, we are assured, that *Grace and Truth came*, or were manifested to the World, by *Jesus Christ*: *Grace*, or Favour, to free them from the condemning Power of the Divine Law; and *Truth*, to guide and establish them in the Way of Peace and Holiness. By the infinite Value of His Sacrifice, He has delivered all those who obediently believe in Him, from the Sentence of Eternal Death; and by His perfect Obedience He has purchased for them Reconciliation, and Acceptance with God. In Him, the Sacred Harmony of the Divine Attributes is eminently exalted, and display'd to Mankind: So that Justice and Holiness, *Mercy and Truth have met together*; and *Righteousness, Joy and Peace have kissed each other*. If we trace him through the short Time of his Abode on Earth, we shall find the bright Rays of Divinity shining with a super-eminent Lustre, in his Person, Doctrine and Works; and proving his divine Mission and Authority with the most convincing and irresistible Light. His mean and humble Birth, though suited to the happy End for which he came into the World, was attended with a glorious Retinue of witnessing *Angels*; who proclaimed, with a Transport of Joy, the blessed Design and invaluable Benefits of his wonderful Incarnation: And whilst the Eternal Deity condescended to humble Himself with a State of Infancy below, an extraordinary *Star*, such as the World had never seen, and acknowledged with distinguishing Remarks, even by *Heathen Writers*, appeared as his Witness and Record in Heaven. This was confirmed by those pious and discerning *Sages*, who, by its special Guidance, came so far from the Eastern Parts of the World, to pay their early Homage to the *Saviour and King of Israel*. By a Divine Impulse,

Impulse, the Good old *Simeon* and *Anna*, who, in a long continued Course of Devotion and Prayer, *had waited for the Consolation of Israel*, with an Ecstasy of Joy, bare an open Testimony to *the Holy Child Jesus*; as the Accomplishment of the Promise made to their Fore-fathers, and exactly agreeing with the Characters recorded of him by their own *Prophets*. The Learned *Doctors* and Chief Rabbies, with whom he disputed, at Twelve Years old, were abundantly convinced that his Wisdom and Depth of Reasoning were more than Human, whilst their prejudiced Minds would not stoop to acknowledge him as such. At his Publick Baptism, both the Father and Holy Spirit attested that he was *the Son of God*, and the true *Messiah*: The former, by an audible Voice from Heaven; and the latter, by descending visibly upon him, *in the Resemblance of a Dove*. His Doctrine, which tended to promote the purest Morality, and the Love of God, was clear, plain and familiar, yet awfully Majestick; and * confessed to surpass all that the World had ever heard. His Miracles were generally adapted to relieve the Miseries of Mankind, and acknowledged by his bitterest Enemies, to be unquestionable; whilst, with equal Malice and Absurdity, they ascribed them to an Infernal Power. Every Blind Person, whom he restored to Sight, in the View of numberless Spectators, could not but discern his Almighty and irresistible Hand: And every dead Body, whom he instantaneously raised to Life, was an unexceptionable Proof that *the Fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him*. The latter returned from a State of Silence, to proclaim his Glory; and gave a powerful Testimony to his Mission from Heaven. *The Evil Spirits*

* John vii. 46.

which were ejected by him, not only obeyed his resistless Commands, but were more Orthodox than the reviling *Pharisees*, or modern *Infidels*; for they acknowledged that he was *the Christ, the Holy One of God*. In a Word; Miracles attended him to the Cross, and to the Grave; darkened the Sun, for Three Hours in its Meridian Strength, when no Eclipse could happen from a Natural Cause; shook the Earth to its deepest Center; rent in twain the awful Partition of *the most Holy Place*; releas'd many of the *Prisoners of Hope*, to accompany their Almighty Deliverer, by an earlier Flight into the Regions of Blessedness; and opened the guarded Sepulchre at the prefixed Time, to make Way for his Resurrection to *the Right Hand of the Majesty on high*. Nor did the Witnesses to his Deity, and Heavenly Doctrine, cease here: For, as the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* testifies, *That Word of Salvation which was, at the first, spoken by Jesus the Lord, was afterwards confirmed and published to the World by those that heard him: God himself bearing them Witness, both with Signs and Miracles, and diverse Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will*. Thus, the Truth and Certainty, the irresistible Force and Efficacy of this Divine Doctrine, against the united Malice and Opposition both of *Jewish* and *Gentile* Adversaries, became transmitted to all Nations, in their great Variety of Languages; and being eminently accompanied with the immediate Influence of the Holy Spirit, made such powerful Impression on their Minds, as prov'd abundantly sufficient both to convince an Unbelieving World, and to change the very Frame and Complexion of their Souls into the Love and Obedience, and even into the Nature and Likeness of it. To contemplate the Beauty, the Reasonableness and the inestimable Advantages of the Christian Religion, in respect of
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the present, and of the future Life, is indeed powerful enough to recommend it in every Age. But what is this, to a Mind four'd with inveterate Prejudice, drowned in Sensuality, and hardened by such atheistical Notions as are suited to its own unhappy Choice? In the ordinary Course, and Reason of Things, the Tongue of Man, or of an Angel, can avail but little, till the Minds of such Persons are previously disposed to receive the most sacred and important Truth with Meekness and pure Affection; and with a Willingness to submit to clear and rational Evidence of its Divine Authority, and of the happy Ends for which it was so graciously revealed to Mankind. Such is that holy and invaluable Religion which we profess: A Religion, that is perfectly agreeable to the Dictates of pure and unprejudiced Reason; as it highly tends to illustrate the infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Love of God, and lays the only Foundation of true Happiness to Mankind in this World, with the sure Pledge of a blessed Immortality in the next. A Religion planted by Men of the most holy and unblemished Characters: Who, for the Love of it, quitted all the pleasing Gratifications of this Life; and, after a Course of the most painful Labours, Hardships and Sufferings on Earth, joyfully offered up their Lives, in the Defence of it. A Religion embraced, and eminently vindicated against the groundless Cavils of its avowed Enemies, by Men of the clearest Reason, the most discerning Judgment, and the most distinguishing Abilities in every Age; as well as powerfully recommended by such visible Credentials from Heaven, as plainly prove its great Original, the eternal Fountain of Wisdom and Truth. It has hitherto made its Way, with Victory and Triumph, through all the Opposition of former Ages, and will continue to do so, unto the End of Time; when its Glorious Author shall

shall appear, with the Ensigns of Divine Majesty, to *judge the World in Righteousness*, and to give a suitable Reward both to the faithful Professors, and the obstinate Contemners of it.

I would conclude this Argument with two or three plain and rational Inferences, adapted to the too growing Infidelity of the present Age. And,

1. We may hence infer the Agreeableness and Subserviency of Natural Religion to that which is Revealed.

The former leads Men to an awful and religious Acknowledgment of the Wisdom, Power and Goodness of God, and of his great Beneficence to Mankind, from the Works of Creation, and the ordinary Course of his Providence; together with some kind of general Hope in his Mercy: But the latter plainly points out to them the blessed Means of their Reconciliation, considered as fallen and miserable Creatures; with the only acceptable Manner of serving him, according to the infinite Purity of his Nature and Will. To condemn or vilify this, where it has been long received and enjoyed, is offering Violence to Reason, and the Light of Nature: And as it will prove the * great, or most distinguishing Condemnation, in the final Day of Account; so it must needs intitle to a far greater Degree of Guilt and Punishment, than that of the most Ignorant and Idolatrous among the *Heathen* World. For every such presumptuous, incorrigible and unthinking Person, as will reject or disparage

* John iii. 19.

a Divine Revelation, mercifully intended for the highest Happiness of Mankind, wilfully prefers the dim Light of an imagined Self-sufficiency, to the Truth, Wisdom and Love of God; and thereby sinks very far beneath, or rather acts contrary to the pure Dictates of Natural Religion, and of that very Reason which he has made his Idol, and fondly contends for. 'Tis, indeed, amazingly strange, that any one, who will give way to a Justness of Thought, can have a low Esteem of such a Religion, as effectually tends to deliver Mankind from Sin, from Misery, and eternal Death. What an Height of Infatuation must it needs be, to despise, and undervalue a Doctrine, which gives the only true Hopes of Pardon, Reconciliation and everlasting Happiness, to those who had altogether forfeited it! which encourages and enables Men to appear before God with Comfort; though their Sins and Failings are many, and the best of their Obedience shaded with Imperfection! And which proposes these invaluable Privileges, upon the most solid and infallible Grounds; such as the Veracity and Faithfulness of God!

2. From what has been already said, we may infer the Unreasonableness, the extream Folly, and the final Misery of entertaining loose and atheistical Sentiments.

Not only the abundant Testimonies in Holy Scripture, but our own Reason assures us, That there is a natural Sense of a Deity implanted in all Reasonable Beings; which is the first Principle of true Religion. As this is cherished and obeyed, 'twill necessarily lead Men to an humble Trust and Confidence, and to a superlative Joy and Delight in that infinitely Gracious Being, as the first and chief Good. The further happy Consequence will be a constant Endeavour to
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please and honour Him, by the internal Acts of Adoration and Praise, and by a Conformity to all his imitable Perfections. But every Dissolute, Sceptical and Unbelieving Person, by assuming a State of Independence, acts contrary to the genuine Dictates of his own Understanding; puts a Force upon Nature, and violates the eternal Rules of Reason and Truth. Having, by gradual Steps, made the dreadful Conquest upon himself, so as to bear down the troublesome Convictions of Conscience, and all serious Reflexion, it becomes necessary to the Quiet of such a stupid and indolent State of Mind, to form a Set of Notions suitable to the Support of it; and to imagine, against the strongest Evidence to the contrary, that there is no Supreme, Omniscient and Almighty Being; that the moral Difference between Good and Evil is altogether imaginary; that Men are wholly at Liberty to gratify Sense, in all its Exorbitances; without being liable either to Self-condemnation at present, or to any Superior Power, that can call them to a future Account; and that when they die, their whole Being will be extinct, and all the Principles of Nature reduced to their first Nothing. But this is such a wild, extravagant and inconsistent Way of Thinking (if it can deserve the Name of Thought) as contradicts the common Principles of Reason and Truth, and the universal Sentiments of the Sober and Judicious Part of Mankind, in every Age and Nation since the World began: And it is so far from affording any solid Satisfaction to those unhappy Persons, who presumptuously cherish it, that they are seldom, for any long Time, consistent with themselves. Their whole Scheme is made up of bare Negatives, and resolute Contradiction; whilst the best Notions they have ever yet advanced, are so precarious, that no wise and thinking Person, if he had Ten thousand Souls, would venture One of them upon so weak a

Foundation. Doubts and Fears very often unavoidably break in upon them : So that, in many known Instances, they have not been able to conceal the Force of terrible Convictions, at the Approaches of Death ; nor the Dread of a Deity, to examine and pass a Righteous Sentence upon their past Conduct. As the truest Satisfaction in the World arises from a lively Sense of Reconciliation with God ; from a Conformity to the Principles of rectified Reason, and to the immutable Rule of Righteousness and Truth which he has revealed to Mankind ; and, in one Word, from a Mind tinctured with universal Goodness : So there is no greater Anxiety or Disquiet, which we can form an Idea of, than that which arises from a Distrust of the Being, Wisdom, Goodness and Love of God ; from a fixed Prejudice against, and a resolute Endeavour to efface the indelible Principles of Natural Religion, which Mankind in general assent to, and which are the Foundation of Safety, Comfort and Happiness to the Universe. All the forced Gaiety, and bold Sallies of satirical Wit cannot keep up a tolerable Evenness in such miserably distorted Minds. For Nature will sometimes recoil, and be too hard for them : Jealousies and Doubts will alternately prevail ; and force them, as much as is possible, to flee from their own guilty Thoughts, and from the wild Notions which they have imbibed, by such dreadful, and yet unavoidable Suggestions as these, “ What
“ if, after all, it should be found that there is a Supreme,
“ infinitely Wise, Powerful and Righteous Being ? That he
“ will judge all Mankind according to the Purity of that Law
“ implanted in their Nature ; and such as have enjoy’d the
“ Revelation of his blessed Will, according to their faithful
“ Obedience, or presumptuous Contempt of it ? And that he
“ will uphold their Being, in an eternal Duration, to under-
“ dergo the invariable Sanctions of that Divine Law, both
“ Natural

“ Natural and Revealed, which he had enjoyed them ? ”
Therefore,

Lastly, we may infer, that the true Happiness of this Life,
as well as the only comfortable Prospect into Eternity,
is founded in the Christian Doctrine and Faith.

If there be any such Happiness as is worthy of human Nature, to be enjoyed or hoped for in this World ; if pure and uncorrupted Reason, and not vitiated Appetites, be admitted for the true Standard of Pleasure ; it will undeniably follow, that he is the happiest Man upon Earth, who lives according to the Purity of his Reason, guided by the superior Light of Divine Revelation. He enjoys a Pleasure and Satisfaction every way worthy of himself ; such as arises from a Great and Generous Mind, from a constant Course of good and vertuous Actions, and a right Use of that Liberty, which, as a moral Agent, he has been intrusted with, by the supreme and infinitely Wise Being. For it is no other than a natural Consequence, that every one who is so happy as to live thus, by the pure Rules of Reason and Religion, should be always consistent with himself ; free from the Violence of hurtful and irregular Passions ; and, being at Peace with God, through Jesus Christ, should enjoy the continual Repast of a good Conscience, which the whole World cannot rob him of. His Course on Earth is easy and safe, and his Prospect into Heaven clear and unclouded ; whilst he steadily pursues the true End of Living, and keeps the Incorruptible Crown, of a Blessed Immortality, always in View. Happy then, is every one, who, by the Divine Blessing on a Religious Education, has made a fair Progress in the Ways of Christian Piety. For (whatsoever some may think to the contrary) to escape
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the flowing Torrent of Profaneness and Infidelity, in a loose and degenerate Age; to love and honour the Best and Kindest Being, by an obedient Conformity to his revealed Will; to be daily conversant in the Statutes of Heaven, the Sacred Springs of Divine Knowledge, and the unerring Rule of Life; and to contemplate the adorable Perfections of *Him* who is infinitely *Fairer than the Children of Men*; of *Him* who is the Essential Wisdom and *Glory of the Father, full of Grace and Truth*; is a Proof of the most exalted Vertue, the soundest Judgment, and the most excellent Conduct. In a Word; the Mind that is thus happily enriched, has a Treasure inexhaustible, an everlasting Possession, and a lively Fore-taste of that future Blessedness which it ardently aspires after. This will not only keep a Man in perfect Friendship with himself, and with all others of the most distinguishing Judgment and Merit, but, when he comes to finish his Days in Peace, will accompany him into the other World, and receive a final Approbation from the infinitely good and gracious Being, the Supreme Judge and Rewarder of all Mankind.

And now, having endeavoured to shew the Harmony between Natural Religion, and that which is divinely Revealed; and likewise the Unreasonableness, Folly and Danger of Atheistical Sentiments; give me Leave to add, That *You, Gentlemen*, whose proper Business it is, to know and search farther into the many useful Productions of Nature, in the Vegetable, Animal and Mineral Worlds, with their various Preparations and Improvements; *You*, who have so many Opportunities to observe the Wisdom and Goodness of the Divine Providence, both in implanting their peculiar Vertues, and discovering their admirable Efficacy, to relieve the Maladies and Miseries of Mankind; *You*, I say, would be, of all Men
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the most inexcusable, if you should be so unmindful of the Gracious Author and Giver of all good Things, as to fall in with that Deluge of Profaneness and Irreligion, which seems to be more and more breaking in upon us: And especially, if You should, in any measure countenance the daring Efforts of those Enemies to human Happiness, who take a Pride in vilifying their Almighty Creator and Benefactor, in his Name, Honour and Worship; and in the Revelation of his Blessed Will to Mankind, by *Jesus Christ*. *I hope far better Things of You*: And make no Question, but that You will unanimously agree with the Holy *Psalmist* in those becoming Acknowledgments, — *O Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the Earth! How manifold are thy Works! In Wisdom hast thou made them all; the Earth is full of thy Riches. O that Men would therefore praise the Lord for his Goodness, and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men!* And, above all, that You will join with the Great *Apostle*, in giving Thanks to *God the Father through Jesus Christ*: *By whom, and for whom all Things were created, both in Heaven and on Earth; and in whom are hid all the Treasures of Divine Wisdom and Knowledge.*

Having such a sure Anchor, in the Divine Promises, which are immutable, as the supreme and infinite Being, I presume You will proceed, with a pious and stedfast Resolution, to lay hold on the blessed Hope of eternal Life, which God, who cannot lye, has given us in our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. At whose glorious Appearance, all the dark Mists of Scepticism, Ignorance and Error, which now arise out of the *Bottomless Pit*, shall be eternally dissipated; to make Way for that happy and desirable State of Things, wherein a clear and comprehensive Knowledge in the deep Mysteries of Nature and Providence, joined with universal Charity, shall shine out

out in its perfect Lustre: And wherein *there shall be no more Death, neither Sickness, Sorrow or Pain*; but all the useful Labours You have undergone, in relieving the Miseries of the Afflicted, shall return an Hundred-fold into Your own Bosom, and be everlastingly rewarded with that distinguishing Sentence — *Well done, good and faithful Servants; enter Ye into the Joy of your Lord.*

Which God grant, for his Mercies sake in Jesus Christ: To whom, with the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, both now and for ever. Amen.

F I N I S.

